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FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0206

INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE

RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE

RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE

RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1153

RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1021

RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 3337

RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 1590

RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2182

RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL

RUEAAIA/CIA WASHDC

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC

RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

UNCLAS ASHGABAT 000174

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STATE FOR SCA/CEN, SCA/PPD, EUR/ACE, DRL  
AID/W FOR EE/EA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PHUM PREL EAID KPAO KDEM SOCI TX

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: "ALUMNI OPPORTUNITIES" NETWORKING EVENT  
PROMOTES CIVIL SOCIETY

¶1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

¶2. (U) Nearly 60 alumni from throughout Turkmenistan and representing nearly all U.S.-sponsored educational and professional exchange programs, including Future Leaders Exchange program (FLEX), UGRAD, Muskie, AUCA, and others, gathered at the Ak Altyn Hotel in Ashgabat for a five-hour alumni networking event on January 27. More than half the participants came from FLEX and were 18-20 years old. During the first half of the event, the vibrant and energetic alumni discussed their experiences working on different community projects, including organizing English-language summer camps, community clean-up projects, or computer classes for the blind.

¶3. (U) During the second half of the evening, the alumni brainstormed new ideas for 2008 projects, especially for a future alumni reunion. They divided into four small working groups, each with a designated table leader. They discussed the time, place, and theme of a future reunion. Each table presented its ideas to the group as a whole, who then offered comments. At the end of the evening, a vote was taken on the best themes and ideas.

¶4. (SBU) COMMENT: Alumni Opportunities 2008 was more than a successful networking and planning event. It was also a good exercise in civil society. Alumni took part in an important "town hall" meeting, which helped them form a connection with other participants, participate in a collaborative decision-making process, and highlight community service. Given the unique social and political pressures of Turkmenistan where there are few opportunities for academic, professional, or civic development, Post regularly reaches out to alumni to reinforce this network and to ensure that the skills, knowledge, and confidence they gained while in the United States are put to use to serve their communities. Post plans to fund future alumni events. END COMMENT.

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